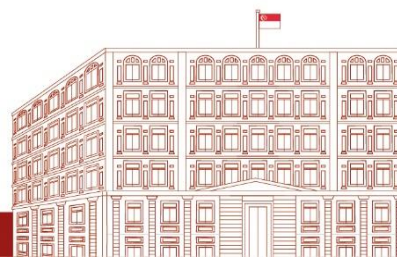


Transcript of Opening Remarks by SMS(CI) Tan Kiat How
Singapore-China Digital Policy Dialogue
Part 1: Closed-door Government Dialogue
27 June 2024, 2.30pm at The Presidential Hotel, Beijing

Head of National Data Administration Liu Liehong
Colleagues and Friends

1. Singapore and China share strong bilateral ties and our digital cooperation has made good progress in recent years. In April 2023, Singapore's then-Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Chinese President Xi Jinping reaffirmed Singapore and China's strong ties, and our bilateral relations were upgraded to an "All-Round High-Quality Future-Oriented Partnership" (全方位高质量前瞻性伙伴关系), signalling our commitment to further strengthen our collaboration.
2. It was also during that visit where both leaders agreed to establish a new bilateral policy dialogue platform to identify potential synergies between China's Digital China Plan (数字中国) and Singapore's Smart Nation Initiative. Both initiatives approach digital development across multiple pillars such as the economy, governance, and society. We have common goals of tapping digital technologies to benefit our people and businesses.
3. At the same time, digital technologies are evolving and advancing at a rapid pace. Countries are facing a transformative era that demands agility, innovation, and collaboration. Given this context, it is important for countries, big and small, to not only keep abreast of these changes but also to learn and adapt good practices in governance and development. It is through this lens of continuous experimentation and adaptation that we can ensure the relevance and resilience of our digital ecosystems.
4. Singapore and China's digital cooperation is long-standing and multifaceted, characterised by numerous collaborative efforts that have strengthened over the years. For example, our third government-to-government project, the China-Singapore (Chongqing) Connectivity Initiative was launched in 2015. Through the CCI, both sides have unlocked greater connectivity and cross-border data flows through various pilots. In 2019, the Singapore-China (Shenzhen) Smart Cities Initiative (SCI) was established as part of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network. The SCI serves as a pathfinder for policy innovations to facilitate cross-border data flows and digital trade. Singapore has also signed various MOUs on digital economy cooperation with Chinese cities such as Chongqing, Shanghai, Beijing, Shenzhen and Suzhou to implement pilot use cases in digital trade and cross-border data flows, as well as to promote innovation and business facilitation.



5. The Digital Policy Dialogue (DPD) builds on this foundation of our partnership, providing a pivotal platform for both countries to elevate our collaborations to the next level and to systematically grow our partnership in the digital domain.

3-2-1 Framework

6. Given that this is the inaugural DPD, I would like to put forth a few suggestions for us to take the work forward. 让我提出一个‘321 框架’ - 三个目标、两个焦点、一心务实。

Three Objectives for the DPD (三个目标)

7. It is important to set clear objectives that will guide our collaborative efforts. Let me highlight the three objectives for this bilateral platform.

8. Firstly, the DPD serves to **enhance our mutual understanding of each other's digital ecosystems**. By sharing good practices and learning from one another, we can identify areas where our ecosystems and companies can thrive through collaboration. This exchange of knowledge and expertise is the bedrock upon which we can build a robust and symbiotic relationship.

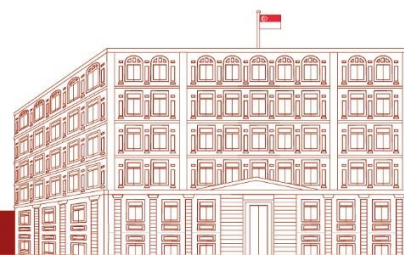
9. Secondly, the DPD aims to **foster policy innovation that supports our industries and companies** as they navigate and grow within the digital economy. These entities are the engines of growth and job creation, and it is our responsibility, as policymakers, regulators and government agencies, to create an environment that is conducive to their success. By working together, we can develop forward-thinking policies that not only address current needs but also anticipate future challenges.

10. Thirdly, the DPD seeks to proactively **address the challenges faced by ground-up projects and initiatives**. By scaling the lessons learnt from these endeavours, we can amplify their impact across our broader digital economy ecosystems. This approach allows more cities and provinces to benefit from our collaboration, and will likewise benefit more companies. These three objectives are in the spirit of what 刘局长 had earlier mentioned - how we deepen our understanding, look at policy innovation and experimentation, but more importantly, solve real problems.

Two Focus Areas (两个焦点)

11. Over several meetings in the past few months, our teams have identified two focus areas for the inaugural DPD - Firstly, to **facilitate trusted commercial data flows** for companies and secondly, to promote mutual understanding of **AI safety and governance** approaches to ensure its safe application for businesses and our people. These are our two focus areas and the work groups will present to us later on.

One Common Approach (一心务实)



12. Let me move on to the last point which is “One Common Approach”. In addressing these focus areas and working towards our objectives, we should adopt one common approach that mirrors the dynamism of the tech sector itself. That is, to be **pragmatic and agile, taking concrete steps to tackle issues** while remaining adaptable to the rapid changes that define the digital realm. This approach will allow us to respond swiftly to new developments, ensuring that our partnership remains at the cutting edge of digital innovation.

Three Levels (三个层面)

13. I am also very happy that we are adopting this approach at three levels. The first level is Government-to-Government engagement where regulators and policymakers come together to talk and address issues; the second level is bringing in like-minded partners from industry and academia to discuss these issues; and the third level is at the industry level where businesses come together to adopt this framework to implement projects and drive innovations.

14. I look forward to the sharing from NDA, the working group leads and representatives from the five cities at this closed-door government dialogue today. May our bilateral digital cooperation start on a good foundation and be taken to greater heights with the support of 刘局长 and his team.

